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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

PTOL-90A (Rev. 04/07)

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE <u>3</u> MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.
- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-33* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1-33* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☒ The drawing(s) filed on <u>06 October 2003</u> is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1)☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2)☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3)☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date *1/20/04.*

4)☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .

5)☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application

6)☐ Other: _____ .

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

1.   Claims 31 and 33 are objected to because the phrase "the selected user" in line 2 is not

defined in independent claim 28. It appears that the Applicant intended the claims to depend on

claim 29. For examination purposes, the Examiner interprets claims 31 and 33 to depend on

claim 29.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2.   The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

> The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the
> subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3.   Claims 3 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite

for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant

regards as the invention.

4.   Claim 3 recites the phrase "the user" in line 2. It is unclear which user the claim is

directed to in the case of multiple users.

5.   Claim 10 recites the phrase "the user" in line 2. It is unclear which user the claim is

directed to in the case of multiple users.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

6.   The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the

basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

> A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.
(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

7.   Claims 1-5, 7-11, 13, and 29-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated

by Liechti et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,715,164.

8.   As per claim 1, Liechti teaches a postage evidencing meter comprising: an authorization

database for storing parameters for at least one user (Liechti: Figure 2, "220", "230", and "240",

column 3, lines 61-66, and column 5, lines 5-9), wherein the parameters limit the at least one

user's ability to evidence postage using the meter (Liechti: column 3, lines 61-66 and column 5,

lines 5-9 – The Examiner interprets the postage amount limit, time limit, and piece limit to be

stored in a database within the meter memory.).

9.   As per claim 2, Liechti teaches the postage evidencing meter of claim 1 as described

above. Liechti further teaches the parameters include a maximum postage amount that the at

least one user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: column 5, lines 5-9,

"postage amount limit").

10.   As per claim 3, Liechti teaches the postage evidencing meter of claim 1 as described

above. Liechti further teaches the parameters include a period of time during which the user is

allowed to use the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: column 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

11.   As per claim 4, Liechti teaches the postage evidencing meter of claim 1 as described

above. Liechti further teaches the parameters include: a maximum postage amount that the at

least one user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage over a selected period of time

(Liechti: column 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

12.   As per claim 5, Liechti teaches the postage evidencing meter of claim 1 as described

above. Liechti further teaches the postage evidencing meter further comprising: a user interface

(Liechti: Figure 2, "207" and "215" and column 4, lines 4-10); a printer (Liechti: Figure 2, "250"

and column 4, lines 12-15); and a security module (Liechti: Figure 2, "250" and column 4, lines

15-17).

13.   As per claim 7, Liechti teaches the postage evidencing meter of claim 1 as described

above. Liechti further teaches the authorization database is coupled to the meter via a

communication link to a remote postage information system (Liechti: Figure 1 and column 5,

lines 5-9 – The Examiner interprets data center 15 to be the remote postage information system.).

14.   As per claim 8, Liechti teaches a system for controlling postage usage, comprising: one

or more postage evidencing meters having a communication module for providing a

communication link between the postage evidencing meter and a postage information system

(Liechti: Figures 1-2 and column 3, lines 46-67 – The Examiner interprets internal modem 205 to

be the communication device and data center 15 to be a postage information system.), wherein

the postage evidencing meter includes a database for storing postage usage parameters for at

least one user (Liechti: Figure 2, "220", "230", and "240", column 3, lines 61-66, and column 5,

lines 5-9) , wherein the parameters limit the at least one user's ability to evidence postage using

the meter (Liechti: column 3, lines 61-66 and column 5, lines 5-9 – The Examiner interprets the

postage amount limit, time limit, and piece limit to be stored in a database within the meter

memory.).

15.   As per claim 9, Liechti teaches the system of claim 8 as described above. Liechti further

teaches the parameters include a maximum postage amount that the at least one user is allowed

to use on the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: column 5, lines 5-9, "postage amount limit").

16.   As per claim 10, Liechti teaches the system of claim 8 as described above. Liechti

further teaches the parameters include a period of time during which the user is allowed to use

the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: column 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

17.   As per claim 11, Liechti teaches the system of claim 8 as described above. Liechti

further teaches the parameters include a maximum postage amount that the at least one user is

allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage during a selected period of time (Liechti:

column 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

18.   As per claim 13, Liechti teaches the system of claim 8 as described above. Liechti

further teaches the communications link is a wireline link (Liechti: column 3, lines 50-52).

19.   As per claim 29, Liechti teaches a method for controlling postage usage comprising:

receiving a request to evidence postage from a selected user (Liechti: column 7, lines 2-4,

column 12, lines 22-24, and column 13, lines 21-24 – The Examiner interprets the creation of a

user account to be the result of a request received to evidence postage from a selected user.);

determining if sufficient postage is available within a current period of time to fulfill the request

for the selected user (Liechti: column 5, lines 22-27 and 33-36 and column 7, lines 14-18);

evidencing a requested postage amount (Liechti: column 7, lines 4-6 and column 12, lines 22-

24); and recording postage usage for the selected user (Liechti: column 7, lines 4-6 and column

12, lines 22-24).

20.   As per claim 30, Liechti teaches the method of claim 29 as described above. Liechti

further teaches receiving a request to use the postage account of a selected user (Liechti: Figure

4, "415", column 6, lines 8-43, and column 7, lines 4-6); and authenticating the selected user

(Liechti: column 7, lines 34-39).

21.   As per claim 31, Liechti teaches the method of claim 28 as described above. Liechti

further teaches receiving a request to configure parameters for the selected user (Liechti: column

6, lines 62-67 and column 7, lines 1-9); and modifying postage usage limits for the selected user

(Liechti: column 7, lines 6-9).

22.   As per claim 32, Liechti teaches the method of claim 31 as described above. Liechti

further teaches the usage limit is a maximum amount of postage that can be evidenced for the

user (Liechti: column 7, lines 6-9).

23.   As per claim 33, Liechti teaches the method of claim 28 as described above. Liechti

further teaches receiving a request to purchase postage for the selected user (Liechti: column 12,

lines 22-24 – The Examiner interprets storing funds on the user's account to imply receiving a

request to purchase postage.); and adding a purchased postage value to an account for the

selected user (Liechti: column 12, lines 22-24).

24.   Claims 23-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Manduley, U.S.

Publication No. 2004/0098354.

25.   As per claim 23, Manduley teaches a method for transferring postage value between

postage evidencing devices, comprising: receiving a request for a postage value transfer

(Manduley: paragraphs 0031, 0034-0036, and 0040, the request identifying a destination device

and an amount of postage value to be transferred (Manduley: paragraphs 0031 and 0034-0036);

creating a postage value token at a first postage evidencing device (Manduley: paragraph 0031,

"If the request 210 is for transferring funds from postal meter 100_a to postal meter 110_b, the

control logic unit 120_b sends a signal 186 via the signal line 184_b to the control logic unit 120_a

requesting such a fund transfer." – The Examiner interprets the signal to be the token.);

subtracting the postage value amount from registers in the first postage evidencing device

(Manduley: paragraph 0031, "...the PSD 140_a reduces the stored funds therein."); transferring

the postage value token to a second postage evidencing device (Manduley: paragraph 0031, "the

control logic unit 120_b sends a signal 186 via the signal line 184_b to the control logic unit 120_a

requesting such a fund transfer"; verifying the postage value token at the second postage

evidencing device (Manduley: paragraph 0038, "the RU sends an acceptance signal via its user

interface, control logic to the DU control logic, which notifies the DU PSD of the acceptance.");

and adding the postage value to registers at the second postage evidencing device (Manduley:

paragraph 0031, ""the PSD 140_b stores the received funds 154 in the postal meter 100_b").

26.   As per claim 24, Manduley teaches the method of claim 23 as described above.

Manduley further teaches transferring the postage value using a communications link between

the first and second postage evidencing devices (Manduley: paragraph 0039).

27.   As per claim 25, Manduley teaches the method of claim 24 as described above.

Manduley further teaches the communication link is a wireless link (Manduley: paragraph 0039).

28.   As per claim 26, Manduley teaches the method of claim 24 as described above.

Manduley further teaches the communication link is a wireline link (Manduley: paragraph 0039).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

29.   The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all

obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in
> section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are
> such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person
> having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the
> manner in which the invention was made.

30.   Claims 6 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Liechti et

al., U.S. Patent No. 5,715,164 in view of Meadors et al., U.S. Publication No. 2004/0194154.

31.   As per claim 6, Liechti teaches the postage evidencing meter of claim 1 as described

above. Liechti further the authorization database (Liechti: Figure 2, "220", "230", and "240",

column 3, lines 61-66, and column 5, lines 5-9). Liechti does not teach a removable storage

device.

32.   Meadors teaches a removable storage device (Meadors: paragraph 0006).

33.   It would have been prima facie obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the

invention was made to have modified the postage evidencing meter of Liechti to have included a

removable storage device as taught by Meadors for the advantage of providing a postage system

that is more versatile.

34.   As per claim 14, Liechti teaches the system of claim 8 as described above. Liechti

further teaches postage usage parameters for at least one user, wherein the parameters limit the at

least one user's ability to evidence postage using the meter (Liechti: column 5, lines 5-9).

Liechti does not teach a removable storage device.

35.   Meadors teaches a removable storage device (Meadors: paragraph 0006).

36.   It would have been prima facie obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the

invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti to have included <u>a removable storage</u>

<u>device</u> as taught by Meadors for the advantage of providing a postage system that is more

versatile.

37.   Claims 12 and 15-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over

Liechti et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,715,164 in view of Manduley, U.S. Publication No.

2004/0098354.

38.   As per claim 12, Liechti teaches the system of claim 8 as described above. Liechti does

not teach <u>the communication link is a wireless link</u>.

39.   Manduley teaches the communication link is a wireless link (Manduley: paragraph 0039).

40.   It would have been prima facie obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the

invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti to have included the communication

link is a wireless link as taught by Manduley for the advantage of providing a convenient way for

postage meters to communicate with one another.

41.   As per claim 15, Liechti teaches a system for controlling postage usage, comprising: at

least two postage evidencing meters (Liechti: Figure 1 and column 3, lines 47-49), each meter

having a processor and a communication module for providing a communication link (Liechti:

Figure 2, "201" and "205" and column 3, lines 58-62), wherein postage usage parameters for at

least one user are exchanged via the communication link (Liechti: column 5, lines 5-9), and

wherein the parameters control the at least one user's ability to evidence postage using the meters

(Liechti: column 5, lines 5-9).

42.   Liechti does not teach <u>a communication link that allows for the exchange of information</u>
<u>between at least two meters</u>.

43.   Manduley teaches a communication link that allows for the exchange of information
between at least two meters (Manduley: paragraph 0039).

44.   It would have been prima facie obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the
invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti to have included <u>a communication</u>
<u>link that allows for the exchange of information between at least two meters</u> as taught by
Manduley for the advantage of effectively transmitting and updating data between meters
without the need for connecting to a remote data center.

45.   As per claim 16, Liechti in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described
above. Liechti further teaches the parameters include a maximum postage amount that the at
least one user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: column 5, lines 5-9
and 22-26).

46.   As per claim 17, Liechti in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described
above. Liechti further teaches the parameters include a maximum amount of postage that can be
evidenced by a user during a selected period of time (Liechti: column 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

47.   As per claim 18, Liechti in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described
above. Liechti further teaches the parameters include: a maximum postage amount that the at
least one user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: column 5, lines 5-9
and 22-26); and a period of time during which the user is allowed to use the meter to evidence
postage (Liechti: column 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

48.   As per claim 19, Liechti in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described

above. Manduley further teaches the communication link is a wireless link (Manduley:

paragraph 0039).

49.   It would have been prima facie obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the

invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti in view of Manduley to have

included the communication link is a wireless link as taught by Manduley for the advantage of

providing a convenient way for postage meters to communicate with one another.

50.   As per claim 20, Liechti in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described

above. Liechti further teaches the communications link is a wireline link (Liechti: column 3,

lines 50-52).

51.   As per claim 21, Liechti in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described

above. Liechti further teaches using cryptographic techniques (Liechti: column 8, lines 17-29).

Liechti does not <u>teach the communication link is used to transfer postage values securely</u>

<u>between the at least two meters.</u> Manduley further teaches the communication link is used to

transfer postage values securely between the at least two meters (Manduley: paragraphs 0030-

0031).

52.   It would have been prima facie obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the

invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti in view of Manduley to have

<u>included the communication link is used to transfer postage values securely between the at least</u>

<u>two meters</u> as taught by Manduley for the advantage of effectively transmitting and updating

data between meters without the need for connecting to a remote data center.

53.   As per claim 22, Liechti in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described above. Liechti further teaches the exchange of postage usage parameters (Liechti: column 5, lines 5-9). Liechti does not teach an exchange between two meters is bi-directional. Manduley further teaches an exchange between two meters is bi-directional (Manduley: paragraphs 0034-0037 – The Examiner notes, one meter can send funds to another meter and vice versa.).

54.   It would have been prima facie obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti in view of Manduley to have included an exchange between two meters is bi-directional as taught by Manduley for the advantage of effectively transmitting and updating data between meters without the need for connecting to a remote data center.

55.   Claim 27 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Manduley, U.S. Publication No. 2004/0098354 in view of Meadors et al., U.S. Publication No. 2004/0194154.

56.   As per claim 27, Manduley teaches the method of claim 23 as described above. Manduley further teaches transferring the postage value (Manduley: paragraph 0031). Manduley does not teach using a removable storage device.

57.   Meadors teaches using a removable storage device (Meadors: paragraph 0006).

58.   It would have been prima facie obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the method of Manduley to have included using a removable storage device as taught by Meadors for the advantage of providing a postage system that is more versatile.

59.   Claim 28 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Manduley, U.S.

Publication No. 2004/0098354 in view of Cordery et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,073,125.

60.   As per claim 28, Manduley teaches the method of claim 23 as described above.

Manduley further teaches a postage value token (Manduley: paragraph 0031). Manduley does

not teach a cryptographically secure token.

61.   Cordery teaches a cryptographically secure token (Cordery: column 5, lines 20-27).

62.   It would have been prima facie obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the

invention was made to have modified the method of Manduley to have included a

cryptographically secure token as taught by Cordery for the advantage of providing a postage

transfer method that is more secure.

Conclusion

The Examiner has cited particular portions of the references as applied to the claims

above for the convenience of the applicant. Although the specified citations are representative of

the teachings in the art and are applied to the specific limitations within the individual claim,

other passages and figures may apply as well. It is respectfully requested that the Applicant, in

preparing the responses, fully consider the references in entirety as potentially teaching all or

part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or
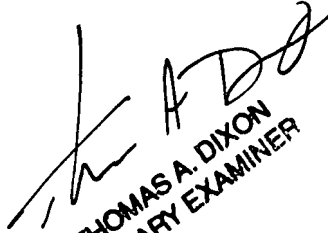
disclosed by the Examiner.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the

examiner should be directed to Eric Liou whose telephone number is 571-270-1359. The

examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday, 8:00-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's

supervisor, John Hayes can be reached on 571-272-6708. The fax phone number for the

organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent

Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications

may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished

applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR

system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR

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like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated

information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

EL

THOMAS A. DIXON
PRIMARY EXAMINER